

# **Platte Valley Habitat Partnership**

## **First Collaborative Workshop,**

**Saratoga, May 18, 2012**

### **Notes**

Tom Ryder opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and introduced Jessica Clement. Jessica will be working with the group to create a collaborative learning process that will ultimately culminate in the creation of a place-based collaborative effort that can continue into the future to work to improve habitat for mule deer and other species in Wyoming's Platte Valley. To allow continued learning over time, an iterative approach will be taken, using a habitat plan as a tool over time to document the learning conducted by the group, and the projects and methods the collaborative group, the Platte Valley Habitat Partnership, will implement with its partners. A first iteration of the habitat plan will be completed by June 2013.

After introductions, Daryl Lutz and Will Schultz, wildlife biologists with the WGFD, presented a power point discussion regarding the status of mule deer in the West and in Wyoming, the Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative, and the status of mule deer in the Platte Valley specifically. This presentation offered the wildlife biologists the chance to take more time and go into more depths into mule deer considerations at various scales, and participants engaged in a thorough discussion.

After this, Jessica discussed the results from the situation assessment which in summary found that all stakeholders contacted were in favor of the endeavor to create both the PVHP and a first iteration of a habitat plan. It also highlighted the importance of issues related to predators, the role of private land owners, and getting habitat work done on the ground.

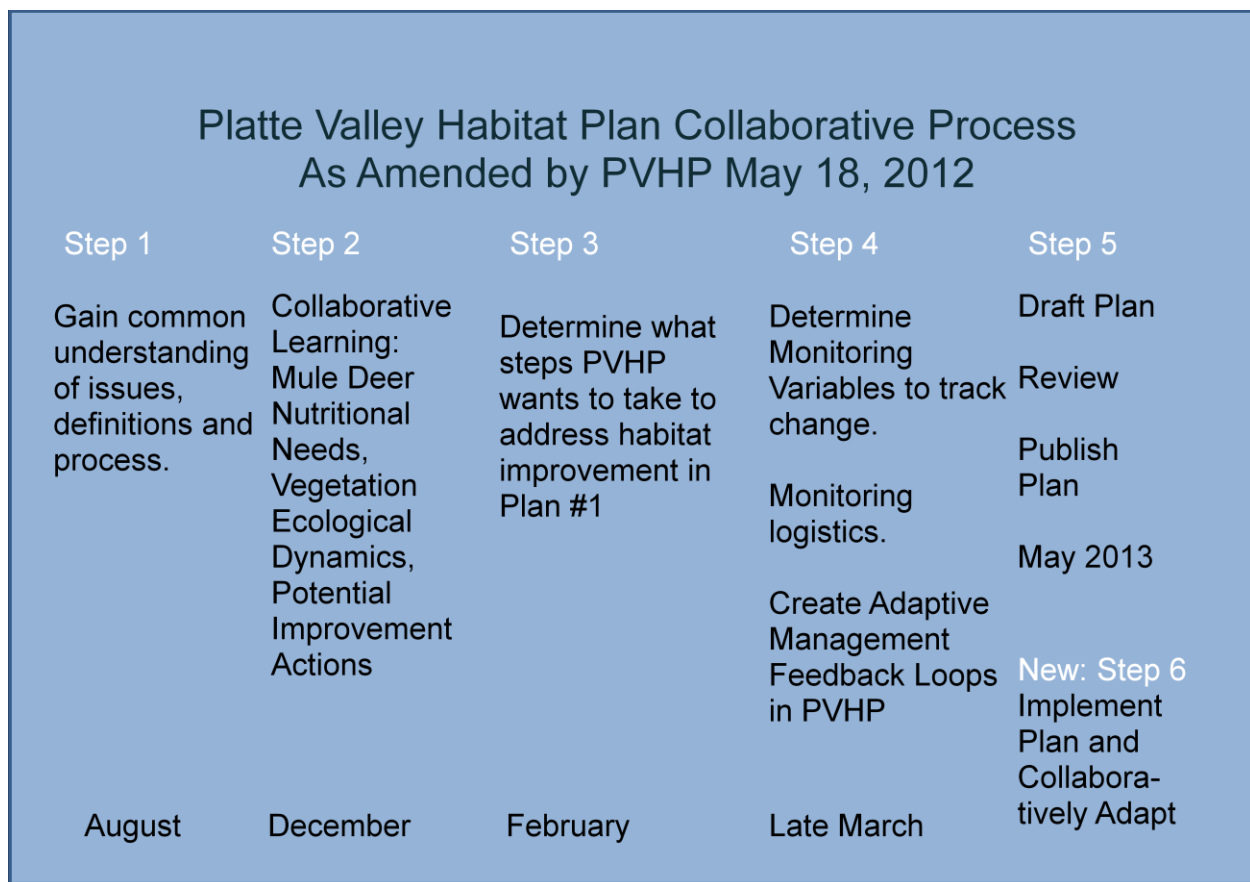
Based on what she learned from the 20 diverse stakeholders interviewed during the situation assessment, Jessica proposed a process to the PVHP that would go through six steps, with suggested completion dates. Before the group decided on whether to agree to this process, Jessica suggested a simple decision making methodology to discover the level of agreement for any procedural or other aspect of PVHP's future deliberations, which simply consists of thumbs:

- Thumbs up – the participant agrees to what is proposed
- Thumbs level – the participant may be able to live with what is proposed but needs more information.
- Thumbs down – the participant cannot agree to what is proposed.

- If there is even one thumb down, whatever is proposed cannot (yet) be enacted by the group. If there is a mixture of thumbs up and level, more discussion is encouraged to allow more learning, and possibly more agreement, to be established. A majority of thumbs up, with some level, none down, means the proposal can move forward.

The process Jessica proposed as a first step forward received predominantly thumbs up from the group, with one thumbs level for Wyoming Wildlife Federation (Dr. Bill Alldredge) who wanted to ensure WWF could commit the time to this process but who was in general in agreement with the process.

The process is illustrated below:



Jessica also explained to the group some principles that form the foundation for a collaborative process that uses collaborative learning methodologies. Collaboration is simply a way for stakeholders to engage with each-other by co-laboring toward an agreed objective. Collaborative learning is the iterative method used to get from step to step toward that objective, which involves the creation of a transparent and accessible body of information that all stakeholders have been able to learn about and share with each-other, in turn allowing informed deliberation to create progress. In this case, the objectives are to:

1. Create a Platte Valley Habitat Partnership that works now and in the future to serve as a place-based collaborative effort that learns about habitat issues for mule deer and other species in the Platte Valley and implements agreed upon projects to improve that habitat.
2. Create a first iteration of a habitat plan, which serves as a living document, and a tool that documents the learning over time from project implementations and monitoring using adaptive management to discover what works, what does not work and new initiatives undertaken as a result.

The last part of the meeting was used to discuss logistics for this collaborative process. The following resulted:

1. Will Schultz offered to find locations for the next two meetings and these locations will be announced when available.
2. WGFD has a budget to pay for lunch and coffee.
3. Meetings will be on Fridays, one day/month, usually the third Friday of the month.
4. WGFD will mail invitations to participants and other interested stakeholders.
5. The Saratoga and Encampment Conservation District offered to announce meetings in its newsletter
6. PVHP participants will reach out to others to attend next meeting.
7. Chris Otto of BLM will generate maps for next meeting for the group to be able to define the Platte Valley and other geographical and ecological concepts.
8. Send list of participants to participants (see below)
9. The next two meetings will take place:
  - **June 22<sup>nd</sup>**, 9 am to 3 pm (June 1 was too soon): this workshop will allow participants to discuss the process further, reach a common understanding about what is meant by "Habitat", "the Platte Valley" and the various types of mule deer ranges, associated vegetation types and other concepts. This creates a clear foundation for the group to work from in the future.
  - **July 20<sup>th</sup>**, possibly from 8 am to 5 pm: Field trip to explore what habitat initiatives have been undertaken in the past, what is currently being done, and lessons learned. This will allow the group to learn in more depth the various vegetation types that are pertinent to mule deer, and other species, the issues involved, the locations of these vegetation types and possible implementations to consider for the first habitat plan. George Williams offered the group a chance to look at some previous efforts and lessons he has learned on his property.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Submitted by Jessica Clement.

## **Flip Chart Notes: Points and questions that Participants raised in the course of the meeting**

### **Mule Deer Presentation**

- Find better time for workshops than weekday – evenings?
- Look at Deseret literature.
- It's not habitat – it's predators.
- This has to be a group effort: BLM and USFS have to be involved.
- Bias in CWD data?
- Need so many bucks for so many does.
- Has CWD always been around but we didn't know how to detect it?
- Will an increase in deer increase the prevalence of disease?
- How many cases of CWD this past year?
- Does the Fallow Deer Louse affect antelope?
- Reduction coyote increase fawns? Compensatory mortality – habitat is tied into fawn survivorship.
- There is a relationship between fluctuations in different prey species to fawn survivorship due to predators.
- One indication to use: fawn ratios over long term
- Find one way of measuring habitat doing monitoring between different stakeholders.
- We need to look at nutrition over the whole range and the whole year.
- Can't monitor the whole range over the whole year. Winter range provides a pinch point.
- Need to remember there are two herd segments (stationary and migratory). And they need to be considered differently.
- Need to also consider transition range. Largely influence condition of does going into winter.
- Over winter fawn survival is an important metric (precision).

### **Situation Assessment and Collaborative Process**

- "Become another Pinedale". How do we address the potential for increase in oil exploration and development?
- You've got to know in advance what you've got before decisions are made.
- Include Dennis Knight 2000 Medicine Bow Forest research article.
- Need to consider the value of riparian/flood plain to fawning and parturition habitats.

- Need to consider other impacts to habitat (i.e. energy development on BLM, USFS lands)  
Need to engage them.
- Need to have some projects through the first year to keep interest up and to learn from.
- Need to engage representatives from possible funding sources early on.
- Continuity of participants will be important.
- Need two things: Commitment from participants and Trust between participants.
- Landowners and agriculture are key.
- Investment potential (re. transferable licenses) will provide money for habitat.
- The eventual habitat Plan is a tool and should not be the only focus. And the plan needs to be a "living document".
- Need implementation!! And we need management on the ground as we develop the plan.
- The Governor needs to be more involved in wildlife and the Platte Valley.
- PVHP needs full disclosure and accountability by WGFD.

#### PVHP Process Logistics

- Possible meeting times: evenings, Wednesdays wouldn't work for G. Williams, Saturdays are OK with USFS and BLM, Land owners.
- Place meeting announcements in SERCD newsletter.
- WGFD will mail invitation.
- PVHP participants will reach out to others to attend next meeting.
- Meetings on Fridays, one day/month. Next meeting on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, from 9 am to 3 pm.
- Third Friday of each month at Saratoga. Location to be announced – Will Schultz is going to find out.
- Chris Otto of BLM will generate maps for next meeting.
- Bring Your Own Lunch?
- July 20<sup>th</sup>: field trip to explore ongoing habitat work. One location: George Williams' property.
- Send list of participants to participants.

## **Agenda**

### **First Workshop Platte Valley Habitat Partnership**

**May 18, 2012**

**Saratoga, Wyoming**

- 9:00 Introductions
- 9:30 Presentation And Discussion: The importance of habitat to mule deer. Daryl Lutz and Will Schultz
- 10:50 Break
- 11:00 Results from the situation assessment
- 11:30 Presentation: Draft Platte Valley Habitat process
- 12:00 Discuss: Does the Group want to work together for a year to learn about habitat issues in the Platte Valley and find agreement on strategies to improve habitat for 2013 and beyond?
- 12:30 Break
- 1:00 Presentation about collaboration and collaborative learning
- 2:00 Dates, Guidelines, needs for next meeting
- 3:00 Adjourn

Participants of Platte Valley Habitat Partnership May 18 Workshop. If any of your information is incorrect, please let Jessica know.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Stakeholder</b>
John Bauchman	?
Jeff Streeter	Trout Unlimited
Linda Dykstra	Resident
Wendy Haas	USFS
Melodee Marienthal	Wyoming Wildlife - The Foundation
Christina Barimeau	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Courtney Amerine	Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Clareesa Zook	?Intern with Wyoming Audubon
Joe Parsons	SERCD
Dennis McGraw	Mule Deer Foundation
Bill Clay	Local Resident, Saratoga
Larry Sandoval	USFS
Bill Alldredge	Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Andrew Coulter	Wyoming Wildlife – The Foundation
Jim States	Trout Unlimited
Pat Rollison	Local Resident and Business Owner
Erik Molvar	Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
Mark Shirley	Wyoming NRCS
Scott Kerbs	SERCD
Chris Otto	BLM
Wayne Platte	Rancher
L.W. Mille	Local Resident, Encampment
George Williams	Rancher
Jerry Butki	Local Resident, Saratoga
Robert Worthington	Local Resident, Encampment
Michael Condict	Local Resident, Saratoga
T. Cody Waldrop	Local Resident, Saratoga
Garrett ?	Encampment, U. of WY
Mae Smith	University of Wyoming, Extension
Daryl Lutz	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Ryan Kenneda	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Tom Ryder	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Biff Burton	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Will Schultz	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Richard King	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Al Langston	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Greg Hiatt	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Bill Brinnegar	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Terry Creekmore	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Ryan Amunson	Wyoming Game and Fish Department